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**Special theme: Millennium Development Goals and indigenous peoples: redefining the Goals**

# Information received from the United Nations system

## United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

*Summary*

At its fourth session, the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues addressed a number of recommendations to United Nations bodies, including two exclusively to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

UNESCO's response is made within the framework of the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity and its Action Plan, adopted in 2001, which has become a guiding instrument for the organization's work on dialogue among and with indigenous peoples, and more recently for all actors concerned by the Second International Decade of the World's Indigenous People (2005-2015). The programme of action for the Decade includes an appeal to all relevant actors to implement the Action Plan of the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity. Article 4 of the Declaration recognizes indigenous cultures as part of the common heritage of humanity, and also emphasizes the protection and defence of indigenous peoples' human rights and fundamental freedoms as an ethical imperative, inseparable from the respect for human dignity. The response is further made in light of the adoption by the organization of the recent Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (2005), which provides a framework and a tool to ensure the right of indigenous peoples to create and disseminate in a fair environment their cultural goods and services and their traditional expressions, so that they might benefit from them in the future.

The present report largely follows the structure suggested by the Forum's secretariat.

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# I. Response by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization to recommendations addressed exclusively to the organization and to those addressed to other United Nations agencies

## A. Millennium Development Goal 1 Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger

**Response to recommendations 12, 13, 14 and 15**

1. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has developed a broad and holistic view of development, emphasizing the indivisibility of culture and development. In keeping with such a view, the 2001 Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity underlined the importance of grounding development in what people know, care about and say that they need. Article 3 of the Declaration states that cultural diversity "is one of the roots of development, understood not simply in terms of economic growth, but also as a means to achieve a more satisfactory intellectual, emotional, moral and spiritual existence". Sustainable development requires that mutual consent be created with people and communities about actions and decisions concerning their development, thus recognizing the contribution that indigenous world views and visions make to sustainable development.

2. The Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, adopted by the UNESCO General Conference at its thirty-third session in 2005, also recognizes the importance of indigenous cultures and in particular the contribution of indigenous knowledge systems to sustainable development. Article 7 of the Convention proposes the creation of an environment that encourages individuals and social groups to create, produce, disseminate, distribute and have access to their own cultural expressions, paying due attention to the specific circumstances and needs of various social groups, including indigenous peoples.

3. Within the context of the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014), for which UNESCO is the lead agency, the organization has pointed out that the economic, social and environmental pillars of sustainable development are all underpinned by culture, which is an area of the Decade to which UNESCO will make major contributions. Special focus will be put on methods of intercultural dialogue and indigenous learning approaches as ways to foster sustainability.

4. Since 2002, UNESCO has supported cultural mapping with indigenous communities as a potentially viable tool to elucidate indigenous knowledge systems, institutions, aspirations and cultural practices in order to relate them to actions and policies concerning the development of indigenous peoples.

5. In February 2006, UNESCO organized an international workshop on cultural resource mapping in Havana, in the context of a regional meeting on the theme new perspectives on cultural diversity and the role of communities, to assess the lessons learned from projects around the world. The meeting, which included a comprehensive presentation by a Forum member on the legacy of indigenous peoples in Latin America, led to the formulation of a communiqué on ethical and methodological principles of cultural mapping and other cultural inventory

techniques. Several recommendations were made to UNESCO: (a) to consider promoting training and best practices in the use of cultural mapping, particularly as it relates to cultural inventories, regenerating and transmitting indigenous and traditional knowledge and learning systems, conflict prevention, gender equity and safeguarding intangible cultural heritage; (b) to promote within the organization an understanding of the benefits and risks of mapping; (c) to cooperate with other agencies in the application of cultural mapping to the protection and promotion of cultural diversity, in the sustainable use of natural resources, and using intangible cultural heritage and traditional knowledge to overcome poverty; and (d) to share its findings with the Forum, the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Environment Programme, including the Convention on Biological Diversity. The meeting emphasized that cultural mapping should be recognized as part of a larger process of building mutual consent between marginalized communities and more dominant groups, including the State.

6. The UNESCO response to recommendation 69 on free prior and informed consent is covered in paragraphs 33 to 44 below.

**Response to recommendations 21 and 23**

7. UNESCO's actions in the field of development are focused on advocacy, research, capacity-building, policy formulation and implementation. The aim is to assist Member States in designing rights-based and culturally appropriate poverty eradication policies founded upon participatory and inclusive processes at the national and local levels. The organization has developed a number of innovative field projects to demonstrate feasibility and potential results as a basis for mainstreaming them nationally or in other countries.

8. UNESCO's Local and Indigenous Knowledge Systems (LINKS) initiative is one of 20 thematically cross-cutting projects contributing to the UNESCO programme for the eradication of poverty. Inside the framework of this rights-based approach, LINKS addresses the social and cultural rights of indigenous communities and promotes local knowledge, values and world views as tools to shape and achieve poverty eradication. To that end, it seeks to empower indigenous communities through recognition of the vital importance of local and indigenous knowledge systems for achieving sustainable development.

9. To strengthen the basis for dialogue between State managers and local resource owners and users, LINKS published the indigenous knowledge compendium, entitled *Reef and Rainforest: An Environmental Encyclopedia of Marovo Lagoon, Solomon Islands* in January 2005 (for further information, see UNESCO response to recommendations 50 and 51).

10. LINKS is currently preparing a publication from the workshop on the challenge of local knowledge, practice and world views, which was organized with the National Centre for Scientific Research of France as part of the international conference entitled "Biodiversity: Science and Governance", held in Paris in 2005.

**Response to recommendation 24**

11. Addressing the special needs of indigenous communities for post-disaster rehabilitation and reconstruction, particularly in the aftermath of the tsunami of December 2004, UNESCO, through its Coasts and Small Islands Platform, with

support from the United Nations Development Programme and Chulalongkorn University, is leading a project on the rehabilitation of traditional communities and municipalities in tsunami-affected areas of Thailand. The project focuses on the indigenous Moken and Urak Lawoi communities that were severely affected by that natural disaster. To best meet the specific needs of those communities, it is essential that cultural heritage and traditional lifestyle be considered and that the communities be empowered to actively participate in post-tsunami development.

**Response to recommendation 30**

12. In February 2006, LINKS published the book *Water and Indigenous Peoples*, which underlines the significance of indigenous water management and rights. Based upon papers and statements from indigenous peoples sessions at the Second and Third World Water Forums, the book will help profile indigenous perspectives at the Fourth World Water Forum to be held in Mexico in 2006.

## B. Millennium Development Goal 2 Achieve universal primary education

**Response to recommendation 49**

13. UNESCO was actively involved in the Fifth World Indigenous Education Conference. It provided financial support and technical assistance to the organization of a panel on goal 2 with respect to indigenous education, including the goal of education for all to ensure that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, have access to free and compulsory education of good quality. UNESCO also disseminated publications relevant to the theme of the conference, including "Education in a multilingual world" (2003) and "The challenge of indigenous education: practice and perspectives" (2004).

**Response to recommendation 50**

14. UNESCO addresses the concerns of recommendation 50 through its ongoing programme on cultural and linguistic diversity in education. With a focus on promoting universally shared values and a culturally sensitive diversification of educational contents and methods, UNESCO is working to promote quality education as a fundamental right for all by addressing a broad range of themes, including respect for cultural and linguistic diversity. Based upon the principles stated in its Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, UNESCO has supported Member States wishing to encourage linguistic diversity while respecting the mother tongue at all levels of education, to promote through education an awareness of the positive value of cultural diversity and to make full use of culturally appropriate methods of communication and transmission of knowledge.

15. Over the last year, UNESCO has pursued action in this area through the publication, translation and dissemination of information material, the development and implementation of several field projects, the creation of advisory committees and the organization of conferences and workshops on the subject. Currently, a position paper and database on intercultural education are being developed. The database will be prepared for public access, targeted for use by expert practitioners, non-governmental organizations, academics and other concerned parties and is envisaged in the format of a CD-ROM for wide public distribution.

16. In 2005, several regional and subregional meetings and workshops on multilingual and multicultural education were organized under the auspices of UNESCO:

- In June in Dhaka, a symposium on multilingual education was sponsored by UNESCO, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and SIL International (Bangladesh). Its objectives were to focus on the education situation faced by many of the 40 ethnolinguistic minority communities in Bangladesh, share specific practices of successful multilingual education programmes in other Asian countries, foster a network of organizations engaged in or planning the said programmes and develop a preliminary set of plans for promoting multilingual education in Bangladesh.
- In October, a workshop on multilingual education focusing on tribal education was sponsored by UNESCO, UNICEF, the National Council for Educational Research and Training and the Central Institute of Indian Languages in Mysore, India. The purpose of the workshop was to bring together members of the tribal communities, practitioners, scholars and policymakers to discuss issues relating to the educational needs of tribal speakers and to learn from each other in planning education programmes that are more appropriate to the educational needs of tribal language communities and that affirm the heritage, languages and cultures of learners.
- A regional workshop on mother-tongue/bilingual literacy for ethnic minorities was organized in Chiangmai, Thailand in December 2005. The objective of the workshop was to provide opportunities for participants in those projects and high-level personnel from formal education systems to share and learn from experiences in implementing mother-tongue/bilingual literacy projects. It also aimed to develop a strategy of policy dialogue and follow-up action plans for expansion/institutionalization of the project in participating countries.

17. To facilitate and promote multilingual education, the UNESCO Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education in Bangkok is developing an advocacy toolkit on multilingual education. The toolkit is designed to raise awareness among top policymakers, mid-level planners and implementers, teachers, educators and communities on the importance of multilingual education.

18. The Bureau is moreover helping nine countries (Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Nepal, the Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam) to implement pilot projects involving mother-tongue/bilingual literacy programmes. Participating countries undertake research with the participation of linguists and community members, prepare context-specific literacy materials using mother-tongue/bilingual approaches and train local personnel in the use of teaching/learning materials for facilitating learning by community members.[1]

19. UNESCO supports the action research project on literacy and curriculum development in mother tongue for the Oraon community in north-west Bangladesh. The project aims at exploring means and tools for developing educational materials in the mother tongue (Sadri) for grade 3, focusing on bridging the gap between Sadri and Bangla, the national language. One of the goals of the project is to explore the feasibility of Sadri-based basic education, not only in economic but also in cultural, social and environmental terms.

[1] See also www.unescobkk.org.

20. In 2006, the UNESCO Santiago office is to publish information on a series of studies and activities that were carried out on educational policies, discrimination and cultural pluralism from 2002 to 2005 in Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Mexico and Peru. The office, in collaboration with the UNESCO Institute for Education, will also participate in a Latin American congress on intercultural bilingual education in Bolivia in 2006.

21. The UNESCO Institute for Education follows a rights-based approach that includes the right to education in the mother tongue that is culturally relevant and sensitive to indigenous contexts. The recognition of cultural diversity and specific learning needs of different target groups, including indigenous peoples, is one of the guiding principles of the process related to the fifth International Conference on Adult Education.[2] The Institute also produced a background paper on literacy for indigenous peoples for the global monitoring report on education for all.[3]

**Response to recommendations 51 and 52**

22. UNESCO has continued its collaboration with ministries at the country level to promote education policy reform in favour of indigenous peoples.

23. In its advisory work with Member States, UNESCO refers to the principles and guidelines set out in the position paper on education in a multilingual world.

24. UNESCO continues to provide technical assistance to the development of curricula and guidelines for textbooks and learning materials by producing and disseminating publications. In particular:

(a) *A Comprehensive Strategy for the Elaboration of Textbooks and Learning Materials* (2005) aims to improve quality education through a rights-based approach to textbooks and learning materials.

(b) "Pluralismo lingüístico" (2005), a document developed by the Universidad Pedagógica Nacional of Mexico in cooperation with the UNESCO Mexico office, gives guidelines on how to develop new language policies while taking into account the linguistic diversity of Mexico.

(c) A project on bilingual (Maya/Spanish) books for primary schoolchildren in Mexico aims to train teachers from the 173 schools concerned which will be distributed in March 2006.

(d) Within the activities on World Heritage Education, the New Zealand National Commission for UNESCO, in cooperation with the UNESCO World Heritage Centre, issued an information package entitled "Our Pacific Heritage: the future in young hands" in November 2004.

25. The UNESCO Windhoek cluster office collaborated with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in the implementation of a USAID-funded project to benefit San children in the three settlements in the Ohangwena region, northern Namibia. The project's main objective was to work with the San to lay the foundations for a better life by strengthening early childhood education. The project aimed not only to reach young children, but also to provide a forum to

[2] See the Hamburg Declaration on Adult Learning, 1997, articles 15 and 18.

[3] Available on the UNESCO website http://portal.unesco.org/education.

involve, educate and organize parents and the broader community, to prepare the way for greater participation by the San themselves in the education system.

26. The UNESCO office in Kathmandu is currently promoting an appropriate learning and life skills programme, integrating elements of traditional and indigenous knowledge and skills. The office has prepared visual and print materials on indigenous skills and knowledge.

27. As mentioned in the UNESCO response to recommendations 21 and 23, LINKS published *Reef and Rainforest: An Environmental Encyclopedia of Marovo Lagoon, Solomon Islands* in January 2005, which ensures a place for vernacular language and indigenous knowledge in Pacific classrooms. The publication was the focus of a pilot exercise, in collaboration with the Solomon Islands Ministry of Education and the University of Bergen (Norway), to investigate modalities for enhancing indigenous knowledge content in the classroom.

28. Similar pedagogical tools rooted in vernacular languages and indigenous knowledge are under development with the Mayangna peoples of the Bosawas biosphere reserve in Nicaragua and the Mapuche Pewenche of Lonquimay, Chile.

29. The LINKS programme also hosts an expanding series of interactive CD-ROMs that target indigenous youth by using new information and communication technologies as a vehicle for traditional knowledge. Following the first CD-ROM on Australian Aboriginal knowledge, entitled *Dream Trackers: Yapa Art and Knowledge of the Australian Desert* (2000), a second CD-ROM entitled *The Canoe is the People: Indigenous Navigation in the Pacific* was launched in October 2005. It highlights and honours Pacific islander knowledge of the ocean environment, including the highly developed cognitive skills of navigation and canoe construction. A Maori language version of the *Canoe is the People* CD-ROM and a learning resource pack to facilitate the use of the CD-ROM in Pacific classrooms are currently under development.

30. In collaboration with the LINKS programme, the International Fund for the Promotion of Culture inscribed the bush schools of the Cree First Nations of James Bay (Canada) on the Harmony List established by the Integral Development Asset Management group. The initiative gives recognition to the efforts of elders to combat juvenile delinquency, alcohol and drug abuse, depression and suicide by taking youth away from problematic village life.

31. An ongoing joint project of the UNESCO Hanoi office with UNICEF on the theme "Transition of ethnic minority girls from primary to secondary education" reveals the barriers faced by ethnic minority girls in further education (e.g. poverty, learning-teaching process, family and cultural issues). The outcomes of the case study undertaken in Lao Cai, Tra Vinh and Gia Lai provinces with four ethnic minorities are being promoted in policy debates for the education of ethnic minorities.

**Response to recommendation 57**

32. As part of the LINKS programme, the Culture and Science Sectors organized an international expert seminar that provided first guidelines for safeguarding the transmission of local and indigenous knowledge of nature in April 2005 at the World Expo, on the theme "Nature's wisdom" (Aichi, Japan). The objective of the meeting was twofold: to explore and document strategies and practices of

transmitting local and indigenous knowledge systems in relation to biodiversity preservation and the sustainable use of natural resources; and to solicit advice and input to the UNESCO programme on linking cultural and biological diversity. The Forum was consulted in the identification of 14 experts. The meeting identified main areas of concern and priority with a view to providing UNESCO with advice on action to be pursued in the short and medium term.

## C. Human rights

**Response to recommendation 69**

33. UNESCO's current medium-term strategy (2002-2007), the organization's major strategic programming framework, outlines the objectives regarding its contribution to the implementation of the International Decade on the World's Indigenous People by promoting pluralism. It emphasizes that efforts will be made to ensure the full participation of minorities and marginalized and vulnerable groups in devising, implementing and monitoring policies and actions which directly affect them through an interdisciplinary approach.

34. Based on the above-mentioned programming framework, the Division of Cultural Policies and Intercultural Dialogue drafted in 2005 a conference paper on the work of UNESCO on cultural diversity and principles of free, prior and informed consent regarding indigenous peoples, presented at the International Workshop on Free, Prior and Informed Consent and Indigenous Peoples, organized by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the secretariat of the Forum in New York in 2005.

35. In response to the request of the one hundred seventy-second session of the UNESCO Executive Board that dialogue among and with indigenous peoples be reinforced in the biennium 2006/2007, UNESCO initiated a new programme on constructing mutual consent with indigenous peoples on policies and actions concerning their development. It is aimed at building knowledge and capacity in support of intercultural dialogue with indigenous peoples to ensure that their aspirations and visions are reflected in local development strategies and national policies, especially as they relate to cultural diversity issues. Activities will be carried out in partnership with the Forum and other agencies and associations representing or defending indigenous peoples, with a special focus on indigenous youth and women.

36. UNESCO has developed a number of standard-setting instruments for the promotion of cultural diversity that provide tools to build mutual consent with indigenous peoples about policies and actions concerning their cultural expression and future development. The most recent of these instruments is the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, which was adopted by the UNESCO General Conference at its thirty-third session in October 2005.

37. In its preamble, the Convention makes explicit reference to the importance of the knowledge systems of indigenous peoples and takes into account the importance of the vitality of cultures, including for persons belonging to minorities and indigenous peoples. The Convention is based on a number of guiding principles, such as the equal dignity of and respect for all cultures, including the cultures of

persons belonging to minorities and indigenous peoples (article 2.3). The Convention encourages Parties to undertake a number of measures to promote cultural expressions and to create in their territory an environment which encourages individuals and social groups to create, produce, disseminate, distribute and have access to their own cultural expressions, paying due attention to the specific circumstances and needs of [...] various social groups, including persons belonging to minorities and indigenous peoples (article 7).

38. As the programme of action for the Second Decade on the World's Indigenous People points out, the challenge will now be for all relevant actors to work towards the ratification by States of the Convention.

39. The Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, adopted in 2003, has already been ratified by 30 Member States and will therefore enter into force on 20 April 2006. The Convention acknowledges the important role played by indigenous peoples in the production, safeguarding, maintenance and recreation of the intangible cultural heritage. The chapter on the implementation mechanism is of great relevance to the principles of consulting and taking into account the views of indigenous peoples, since it emphasizes the importance of involving communities. As concerns the third UNESCO standard-setting instrument relevant to indigenous peoples, the 1972 Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, it is worth noting that the World Heritage Committee is giving increasing attention to the integration of indigenous concerns in the protection of world heritage, including the recognition of the role played by indigenous communities in the definition of what holds heritage significance.

40. The indigenous fellowship programme, organized in collaboration with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, is an example of UNESCO's direct collaboration with indigenous communities. In 2005, UNESCO provided financial support and training services to nine indigenous fellows under the anglophone and the francophone programmes. The fellows stayed at UNESCO for a period of two weeks, interacting with UNESCO colleagues and pursuing their specific research interests. Another group of fellows will be welcomed to the organization in September 2006.

41. In February 2006, participants in an international workshop on cultural mapping in Havana underlined that cultural mapping with indigenous communities was a tool for making intangible heritage and indigenous knowledge systems visible in a medium (i.e., a map) that could be understood by both dominant and non-dominant cultures. Cultural mapping is typically used when communities need to negotiate territories and rights, such as access to, control and use of natural resources. Furthermore, cultural mapping is a methodology that can be used to promote intra- and intergenerational knowledge transmission, as long as the process involves different members, gender and age groups of a community, linking the past, present and future. Based on the lessons learned from concrete experiences with indigenous communities around the world, UNESCO has identified some ethical and methodological principles that could orient future work in this area.

42. The project entitled "Information and Communication Technologies for Intercultural Dialogue: Developing Communication Capacities of Indigenous Peoples", which involved training of indigenous communities in audio-visual content production, led to the release in 2006 of a collection of DVDs produced by indigenous populations from Bolivia, Peru, Namibia, South Africa and Gabon. The

project allowed indigenous communities in the five countries to represent their cultural heritage and resources in films produced by them.

43. UNESCO's Communication and Information Sector provided expertise and advisory services to the Mayan community in Guatemala in the development of a community television channel, with the aim of strengthening the expression of Mayan culture and promoting cultural diversity. Furthermore, two projects entailing the use of communication for the preservation of indigenous culture were launched in Bolivia, involving the Chiquitano and Guarini communities.

44. In 2006, UNESCO participated in a workshop organized jointly by the Forum and the Greenland Home Rule Government on "Partnership visions for the Second International Decade on the World's Indigenous People" in Nuuk, Greenland and contributed a presentation on UNESCO and indigenous peoples: partnership to promote cultural diversity, based on an information booklet to be published in 2006.

## D. Data collection and the disaggregation of data on indigenous peoples

**Response to recommendations 84, 85, 86, 87, 88 and 89**

45. The UNESCO Institute for Statistics is continually working towards the development of an appropriate methodology for new indicators and the improvement of existing indicators, including the identification of inequalities within nations and disaggregating by gender. The Institute is aware of the lack of data available on indigenous and minority communities and is in the process of developing a strategy for including the needs of those groups in the development of its statistics. It is currently planning to develop guidelines for national statistics offices on how to help indigenous communities develop statistical instruments that reflect their cultural concepts.

46. The project will be led by statistical experts from, or working with people from, indigenous communities. The Institute will seek members for an indigenous peoples' steering group to act as advisers and to provide leadership in the development of the project.

47. In 2005, the Institute, in collaboration with the Communication and Information Sector, produced a report on measuring linguistic diversity on the Internet for the World Summit on the Information Society in Tunis. The report, which addressed the barriers that linguistic minorities face in using the Internet, has arguments that can be applied to the problems linguistic minorities experience when trying to gain access to other services, as well as to the difficulties in monitoring such issues (the report is available in English and French on the UIS website www.uis.unesco.org).

## E. Children, youth and women

**Response to recommendation 97**

48. UNESCO has initiated a tribal adolescent development programme in Bangladesh to create social awareness in the community and initiate actions to achieve and protect tribal rights. The programme, which targets over 300 tribal men and women, including 89 adolescents, also aims to promote literacy among tribal

communities, facilitate life and livelihood skills training for increased family income and establish linkages with governments and non-governmental organizations for tribal issues and interests.

**Response to recommendations 26 and 108**

49. UNESCO is in the process of improving in-house dialogue on indigenous gender issues and is continually exploring possibilities for strengthening the consideration of indigenous women in its programmes. The organization participates actively in the inter-agency task force on indigenous women and devotes special attention to the development of partnerships with indigenous women's organizations and women leaders. In that regard, UNESCO sponsored a workshop hosted by the Yaaku peoples association in Kenya from 27 September to 1 October 2005.

50. UNESCO is currently consulting with the Forum and partner agencies to design activities aimed at further exploring the diversity of gender relations in indigenous communities and the recognition of indigenous women's views and roles in the development of their peoples and larger conflict prevention and peacebuilding initiatives.

### F. Future work of the Forum

**Response to recommendation 140**

51. UNESCO participated in the technical workshop on indigenous traditional knowledge, held at the UNICEF regional office in Panama in September 2005, and sponsored the participation of two indigenous experts.

## II. Obstacles to the implementation of recommendations

52. UNESCO is working to improve the mainstreaming of indigenous issues in its programme and to further strengthen partnerships with indigenous peoples. It is also striving to improve knowledge regarding the organization's strategy and possibilities to engage with indigenous peoples. As recognized experts working on indigenous issues are predominantly male and non-indigenous, further attention will have to be given to the selection of indigenous resource persons, and particularly indigenous women, who are often inadequately represented in the conception and implementation of activities.

## III. Other significant information

53. Within the framework of the First International Decade of the World's Indigenous People, a booklet entitled "UNESCO and indigenous peoples: partnership to promote cultural diversity" will be published in time for the fifth session of the Forum. The booklet is conceived as a tool for all those contributing to the implementation of the organization's programme with regards to the rights and interests of indigenous peoples. Furthermore, it presents UNESCO's involvement in the implementation of the First International Decade and the various activities undertaken by UNESCO in its fields of competence.

54. An international symposium on "Conserving cultural and biological diversity: the role of sacred natural sites and cultural landscapes" was held in Tokyo from 30 May to 2 June 2005 by UNESCO and the United Nations University in collaboration with the World Conservation Union, the secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, the secretariat of the Forum and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. The symposium presented case studies on the conservation of sacred natural sites and cultural landscapes all over the world. The symposium called upon Governments, protected area managers, the international system, governmental authorities and non-governmental organizations and others to respect, support and promote the role of indigenous peoples in local communities, as custodians of sacred natural sites and cultural landscapes, through the rights-based approach, in order to contribute to their well-being and the preservation of cultural and biological diversity of such sites and landscapes.

55. UNESCO, in collaboration with the Viet Nam Ministry of Culture and Information, organized a three-day national conference from 15 to 17 February 2006 on the theme "Learning from recent experiences and beginning to identify best practices in safeguarding intangible cultural heritage in Viet Nam". The conference focused on the preservation and promotion of the intangible cultural values of indigenous people. Out of eight projects discussed at the conference, four dealt with cultural issues of indigenous groups, with emphasis on the involvement of ethnic girls and women.

56. Finally, it should be noted that the UNESCO office in Brazzaville is currently implementing a project financed by the Japanese funds in trust on the promotion and safeguarding of the oral traditions of the Pygmies in the Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The project is intended to last for three years, from 2005 to 2007.

## IV. Information and suggestions on the theme of the fifth session

57. UNESCO participated in an international expert group meeting on the Millennium Development Goals, indigenous participation and good governance, held in New York in January 2006.

58. UNESCO fully recognizes the concerns raised by the Inter-Agency Support Group report from the fourth session of the Forum regarding the Millennium Development Goals as vehicles for addressing the needs and aspirations of indigenous peoples. Those concerns are multiple, multifaceted and interconnected, and must be addressed in a unified manner in order for the current state of affairs to be turned around. The Goals need to be considered and approached holistically and understood in the context of the United Nations Millennium Declaration, which sets out a much broader framework for human development, focusing on democracy, human rights and the protection of vulnerable and minority groups.

59. In the case of the Goal 1 and its targets and indicators, it is the inadequacy of the definition of poverty solely in economic terms that has been increasingly debated and criticized. But even from a strictly economic viewpoint, UNESCO has emphasized that the Goal targets and indicators of the Millennium Development Goals are inadequate for indigenous peoples, as they focus solely on monetary income and ignore the informal subsistence economies that are so important for the fulfilment of many of the basic needs of indigenous peoples. As currently defined,

the Goals do not take into account alternative lifestyles and their importance to indigenous peoples — not only in the economic sense, but also as the underpinnings of social solidarity and cultural identity.

60. Regarding Goal 2, attention should be paid to existing mechanisms rather than to the creation of new ones. The Millennium Development Goal campaign should complement rather than replace the mechanisms already in place. Therefore, UNESCO's contribution to the achievement of education-related goals will substantially draw on the mechanisms and instruments set in place for the Education for All process and within the framework of the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, which is led and coordinated by organization.

61. UNESCO joins other agencies in calling for a careful and comprehensive refinement of the Millennium Development Goals to take into account indigenous peoples' perceptions of well-being and poverty, as well as their own formulations of development pathways to sustainability; to recognize the great diversity and continuing dynamism of indigenous peoples' cultures, contexts and aspirations; and to directly involve indigenous peoples from the local level upwards to national and international levels.

62. UNESCO sees the need for greater efforts to strengthen mechanisms for consultation and participation of indigenous peoples in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals, particularly within the framework of the poverty reduction strategies, the common country assessments and the United Nations Development Framework. As articulated in the technical position paper of the Inter-Agency Support Group, implementation should be understood as a process rather than as ad hoc events.

63. The participation of indigenous peoples and the inclusion of their concerns is a major challenge for the Millennium Development Goals; it is crucial for their achievement that they be developed and applied at a local level in a culturally sensitive manner. In this way, indigenous peoples and other minority groups would develop a sense of ownership in the process, thereby contributing to its long-term sustainability.

64. The information booklet to be published by UNESCO in March 2006, "UNESCO and indigenous peoples: partnership to promote cultural diversity", illustrates how UNESCO has worked with indigenous peoples to promote sustainable development based on mutual consent with indigenous peoples on actions and policies of concern to them.